



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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March 27, 2013

The Honorable Mike Carrell
Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee
Washington State Legislature
Post Office Box 40428
Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

Dear Senator Carrell:

In your letter to me dated February 26, you requested I terminate Belinda Stewart's employment with the Department of Corrections (DOC). You further indicated she should be held accountable for her actions and treated the same as other employees within the Department who violated ethics rules and Department policies.

I absolutely agree with your expectations that all state employees should have the highest standards of ethics and accountability to ensure the public trust. My actions since becoming Secretary in July, 2011 include:

1. Immediately revised DOC ethics policies and had the Ethics Board review and approve.
2. Eliminated the provisions allowing staff to support the non-profits in question.
3. Conducted ethics training for the top sixty DOC executives.
4. Provided training to over 1000 DOC staff on ethics laws and the updated DOC ethics policies.
5. Developed an Ethics Website as a resource for staff on information pertaining to ethics laws and policies.

As a result of these efforts, in 2012 the Executive Ethics Board gave the ethical culture within DOC a 5-star rating.

In determining the appropriate level of any staff corrective or disciplinary action, many factors are reviewed and considered. Since the issue you raise occurred before my tenure as Secretary, I wanted to ensure a thorough review of investigative findings and facts, the employee's employment history and personnel file, how similar situations were handled, the egregiousness of the action, and any prior actions for similar misconduct.

I considered the following facts pertaining to Ms. Stewart:

- Twenty plus years of employment with the Department;
- Many contributions to Department programs and initiatives;
- Receipt of numerous accolades and positive performance appraisals;

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- Awareness by former supervisor/administration of the outside employment activity with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and Faith Based Reentry Coalition activity;
- Outside Employment form submitted and approved in 2011;
- Others within the Department provide training for the NIC, and in fact such relationships are encouraged;
- Reassignment from the position of Communications Director to a lower level managerial position of Corrections Program Administrator (which resulted in a substantial salary reduction) in November 2012; and
- Financial penalty of \$17,000 imposed by the Executive Ethics Board as stipulated in 4.1 of their order dated February 25, 2013.

On March 13, 2013, I met with Ms. Stewart to discuss and bring closure to this personnel matter. Ms. Stewart was provided a letter of reprimand from me, a copy of which was placed in her personnel file. Given my complete review of this issue, I believe appropriate action has been taken. As with all personnel matters, you may request a copy through the public records process.

If you would like to further discuss this matter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernard Warner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bernard Warner
Secretary

BW:sg